DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 350 880 FL 020 841

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TITLE	Developing Tomorrow's Teachers of World Languages. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-FL-92-05
PUB DATE	Nov 92
CONTRACT	RI88062010
NOTE	4p.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Change Strategies; *Educational Change; Educational Environment; Futures (of Society); *Language Teachers; *Second Language Instruction; *Teacher Education; Teacher Qualifications
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

In order for educational reform to be effective and lasting, teacher education must undergo a transformation, from preservice training to lifelong professional development. Tomorrow's teaching environment will bring new challenges and possibilities, as schools undergo curricular, structural, and cultural changes in order to meet the needs of an increasingly multicultural, multilevel student body in a constantly changing world. Foreign languages should no longer be seen as alien, but as a key force in the new order, and a deeper understanding of world cultures and the dynamics of intercultural communication must take their place in the language teacher's education. Demands for reformation of education come from many quarters. Some changes will occur automatically, as a result of shifting demographics, mainstreaming, and technological, and social developments. In addition, the language teacher's knowledge base can be expected to shift continually, as information expands in disciplines as varied as language acquisition theory and research, learning styles and strategies, intercultural communication, and research on instruction. New teachers entering the field of foreign language education in the next decades will have an unprecedented opportunity to influence the future. Some of the issues addressed are: What should be the language teacher's knowledge base? Who will the teachers be? How will teacher expertise be measured? and Who will be charged with accomplishing the changes, and how can it be done? (Contains 18 references.) (VWL)

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ED350880

ERIC Digest

Developing Tomorrow's Teachers of World Languages

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Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS
Digest
November 1992

Developing Tomorrow's Teachers of World Languages

EDO-FL-92-05

Prepared by Gail Guntermann, Arizona State University

In order for educational reform to be effective and lasting, teacher education must undergo a transformation, from preservice training to lifelong professional development. Tomorrow's teaching environment will bring new challenges and possibilities, as schools undergo curricular, structural, and cultural changes in order to meet the needs of an increasingly multicultural, multilevel student body in a constantly changing world. Foreign languages should no longer be seen as alien, but as a key force in the new order, and a deeper understanding of world cultures and the dynamics of intercultural communication must take their place in the language teacher's education.

What Are the Forces of Change, and What Has Been the Response?

Demands for the reformation of education come from many quarters, as it is increasingly evident that learners are being inadequately prepared in many areas. Some changes will occur automatically, as a result of shifting demographics, mainstreaming, and technological and social developments. In addition, the language teacher's knowledge base can be expected to shift continually, as information expands in disciplines as varied as language acquisition theory and research, learning styles and strategies, intercultural communication, and research on instruction.

The impact of pressures for change is already being felt, as professional organizations produce standards and guidelines for students and teachers. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 1988) has prepared *Provisional Guidelines for Foreign Language Teacher Education* and is in the process of working with language specific associations (see AATF, 1989; AATG, 1992; AATSP, 1990) to finalize these guidelines and to recognize standards for advanced certification of experienced teachers. The implementation of standards is dependent on informed commitment and often requires special funding in the early stages. ACTFL plans to devote considerable activity to teacher education projects in the 1990s.

What Should Be the Language Teacher's Knowledge Base?

Tomorrow's language teachers will need a thorough grounding in the liberal arts as well as superior preparation in the linguistic and intercultural content that they teach, including the ability to use the language in real life contexts, both social and professional, and to teach academic content in the language. Furthermore, language teachers should understand the social, political, historical, and economic realities of the region(s) where the language is spoken. (See Lafayette, in press, for a thorough discussion of the language teacher's content knowledge.)

Knowing the subject matter is not enough, however; the teacher's pedagogical knowledge and skills (Shulman, 1986) are of equal importance. These include knowledge about human growth and development, learning theory, and language acquisition, and also a repertoire of strategies for establishing community in the classroom and for developing proficiency and cultural understanding in diverse learners. It requires practice in making informed decisions about classroom management and about lesson and curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation. (See Wing, in press, for a review of this area of teacher preparation.)

Who Will the Teachers Be?

Teacher shortages, already felt in many areas, will result from the retirement of large numbers of teachers in the next decades, together with teacher attrition and enrollment growth in language and cultural studies. In order to meet the demand, recruitment and retention efforts will be essential. Recruitment efforts will focus on drawing larger numbers of minority groups, including women, into the profession.

To meet the challenge, these new teachers will need to be professionals—leaders and agents for change, responsible for their own continuing professional development and that of their colleagues. They should conduct action research (research that takes place in the classroom), reflect on their teaching and on their students' learning, and use their knowledge and experience to make necessary changes in collaboration with others.

How Will Teacher Expertise Be Measured?

New teacher tests, based on research and job analyses, are designed to represent real teaching tasks. The Educational Testing Service is developing a new set of examinations, the *Praxis* series, which includes case studies, lesson plans, and other integrative tasks in addition to discrete-point items. The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) has published, in several languages, Simulated Oral Proficiency Interviews (SOPI), which are semi-direct speaking tests used to assess general speaking proficiency in a second language. (For more information on the SOPI, see Stansfield, 1989.) Several states (notably Texas and Florida, as reported in Knop, 1991) have adopted proficiency-based tests for licensure.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1990) is considering including foreign languages in its plans to certify experienced teachers who meet professional requirements, and the American Association of Teachers of German is preparing to award a special certificate to German teachers who can demonstrate by means of portfolios, videos, and other global methods that they meet specified high standards (Schulz, 1991).

Who Will Be Charged with Accomplishing the Changes, and How Can It Be Done?

The movement to improve teacher education involves cooperative efforts among colleges of arts and sciences, colleges of education, the schools, and education agencies. This implies changes in the ways that these entities have traditionally communicated with each other, as well as openness to evaluation and change. Colleges of liberal arts will need to commit themselves to teacher development by hiring more faculty with appropriate expertise and by ensuring that future teachers receive the necessary coursework. The traditional emphasis on literary studies at the expense of advanced-level language development and area studies has produced language teachers who typically lack communicative abilities beyond sentence-level discourse and have only haphazard cultural knowledge. James (1989) describes a program at Hunter College that has been developed to help solve the proficiency problem, through the expansion of language development with instruction in reading and writing. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that, in order to achieve the levels of language and cultural proficiency that are recommended, teachers will require extended experiences abroad.

Colleges of education also must reexamine their programs, if prospective teachers are to develop the understandings that are needed for dealing effectively with the integrated multicultural, multilevel classrooms of tomorrow. (See Hudelson and Faltis, in press, for a forward-looking discussion of generic teacher development that prepares teachers to reform education.) Finally, schools must participate in the professionalization of teaching in collaboration with universities, by promoting mentoring relationships between outstanding teachers and teacher candidates; by recognizing excellence and leadership among teachers; and by providing programs for induction and much more in-service development specific to teachers' subject matter fields.

New collaborative programs are being designed, under the auspices of groups such as Project 30 (Murray & Fallon, 1989) and the Renaissance Group (1989). In these new programs, undergraduate teacher candidates spend more time in the schools from the beginning of their college education, often taking five years to complete their studies, including further work after student teaching (Holmes Group, 1986). Postbaccalaureate and graduate degree programs are other models emerging from these collaborative efforts.

In these early stages of reform, it is possible to focus on desirable outcomes, against which all real results can be measured as they occur. Change can take many directions, however, depending upon the degree to which the players are ready and able to manage it. Foreign language educators will have to attend to the processes of change as outlined, for example, by Fullen and Stiegelbauer (1991), if we are to avoid changing only superficially or in undesirable directions. As Shrier (in press) notes, new teachers entering the field in the next decades will have an unprecedented opportunity to influence the future. Our positive response now to the challenges of reform can best prepare them to take advantage of that opportunity in ways that will benefit tomorrow's learners.

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This report was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S Department of Education, under contract no. RI88062010. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or ED.